



*Office of the United States Attorney  
District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **TWO INDICTED IN SIMILAR GOVERNMENT PENSION THEFTS**

PHOENIX - A federal grand jury in Phoenix returned two separate 1-count indictments for Theft of Government Property arising from alleged thefts of government pension money. One case named as the defendant, Dennis Raifon, 56, of Phoenix and the second case named as the defendant, Michael Jeanne Hopkins, 58, of Lake Havasu City, Ariz. Although the allegation of the offenses were similar in nature, they are not known to be connected.

The Raifon indictment alleges that between March 1995 and January 2007, Raifon converted \$150,823 of U.S. Government money to his own use. The money came from the monthly widow's annuity benefit due his mother. She was the widow of a deceased retiree entitled to benefits from the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board. His mother died on February 23, 1995 but no notice of her death was given to the government agency. The agency continued to issue Mrs. Raifon's monthly checks which were cashed and spent by the defendant without authority.

In the Hopkins indictment, it is alleged that between August 2000 and March 2005, Michael Hopkins converted \$93,330 of U.S. Government money to her own use. The money came from the monthly retirement annuity benefit due her father. He was a retired federal government worker and his pension was paid by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. Her father died on July 12, 2000 but no notice was given of his death to the agency. The agency continued to direct deposit the monthly checks into a joint checking account, the proceeds of which were spent by the defendant without authority.

The discovery of the deaths in both cases came from a computer match program of deceased persons and benefit recipients. Both defendants have been summoned for an arraignment before a U.S. Magistrate Judge at the Phoenix Federal Courthouse on February 20, 2008. An indictment is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

A conviction for Theft of Government Property carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine or both. In determining an actual sentence, each of the judges assigned to the separate cases will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judges, however, are not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

The investigation leading to the Raifon indictment was conducted by Special Agents of the Office of Inspector General of the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board and in the Hopkins case by Special Agents of the Office of Inspector General of the Office of Personnel Management. The prosecution is being handled by Richard I. Mesh, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBERS: CR-08-99-PHX-SRB(Raifon)  
CR-08-100-PHX-NVW(Hopkins)  
RELEASE NUMBER: 2008-031(Raifon & Hopkins)

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